

Committee Being Formed To Keep Heber Creeper in Business

Now that negotiations for the State to buy out the Heber Creeper Railroad have failed and the money allocated for the purchase have been returned to the State's general fund, the Wasatch County Commission, Heber City Council, and Heber Valley Chamber of Commerce are forming a committee to resolve the railroad's problems and keep it moving.

Sen. Alarik Myrin (R-Altamont) reported to the Heber City Council, Thursday evening, and to the Wasatch County Commission, Monday morning, on the intent of the bill he sponsored which was passed by the Legislature on the last day of the session, returning \$1.2 million that was appropriated last year for the purchase of the

railroad to the state's general fund. The bill kept \$400,000 in the Utah Department of Transportation (UCOT) budget for rehabilitation of the railroad once a new lease is drawn up with an operator. Myrin's bill would have kept an additional \$800,000 in the transportation budget for Provo Canyon Rd. construction but at the last minute the bill was amended to return that money to the general fund, too.

Myrin said there is reason to be optimistic about the future of the railroad now, with the State as a willing partner, although he had been worried about it before his bill was passed.

"It was really difficult to justify keeping the money [available for the purchase] saying it might be-

come available and it might not. It might be on a bankruptcy, it might be through foreclosure, or something like that, and then the State's pushing on tax liens, and so on. The more I thought about it, the more concerned I got," he said.

The possible foreclosure he was referring to is on a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan for an undisclosed amount. The agency is not willing to make any statements about its intent in the matter, but Dave Adams, SBA liquidation loan specialist, said last Friday that no foreclosure proceedings had begun at that time. He said the agency doesn't want Ashton to be hurt and does want Heber City to continue to benefit from the operation of the railroad.

Myrin recommended that a committee be formed, representing the City, County and Chamber, to work closely with UDOT and the Heber Creeper owner, Lowe Ashton, in making decisions about the railroad, particularly if a new lease agreement is drawn up with a concessionaire. Chamber members told him there were rumors that UDOT refused to talk to some firms that are interested in running the railroad and he told them to let him know immediately if that is a fact, or any other problems arise.

During the city council meeting, Councilman Keith Jacobson said the whole problem is that "nobody's doing anything that's concrete to make anything happen."

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...on a skating rink in Heber, because it would take the kids off the street and give them something to do in town that is fun. It would be good to have no alcohol or smoking inside the area. It would give us something to do that is good, clean fun. We could build the rink in the old Farmer Jack building. We could build an indoor track around the outside of the rink so we could have people run indoors that do not want to go outside to exercise.

We could charge an admission to skate to pay for the rent of the building. This would also give some jobs to the people of our valley.

Marc Bowthorpe

...unattended. Often when people go to work or the store, they let their dogs run loose. I think that dogs should be put in yards with high fences or in the house when their owner is not home. I also think that when the owner lets his/her dog out for some fresh air (at any time) that the dog should be watched.

Because of the leash law, I think that dogs should not be able to run around unattended. As a preventative measure, a fine should be charged to the owner the second time the dog is picked up.

Laura Ulmer

Letters

Letters To The Editor is a column for the public to voice their opinion. Letters To The Editor must be submitted prior to MONDAY NOON, and must bear the signature, full name and address.

...Highway 40 needs a light. This letter is for a very important cause. We need a light on the Kamas-Midway crossing on Highway 40. I know someone who was killed there in an accident. All the state has put there is a stop sign, but the sign is hard to see. Flashing lights would be a much better idea.

If the state doesn't have any more money, maybe we should raise it by making donation boxes and putting them in Kamas, Midway, and Heber stores because it's a good cause. Someone's life might be saved.

Pat Diessner

Dear Editor: Save the Heber Creeper. We need to save the Heber Creeper. Without it, we will have no tourists. Without it, businesses will go bankrupt and nobody will come to our community. I think we should have a marathon or have the state at least help get some money to keep it on the tracks and keep it going. I think we should also raise taxes to pay for its running.

Blair Schmittel



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Creper...

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He said everybody involved, like the State, the owners, the City, the County, and the Chamber, is sitting around wondering what everybody else is going to do, and that it could continue like that for another five years if somebody doesn't do something. He said the committee needs to look into the status of the liens and other financial encumbrances on the railroad, list some goals, decide what to do next, and resolve the matter.

Max Mawhinney, president of the Chamber, asked if it might be possible for either the City or the County to bond in order to buy out the railroad operation and repay the bond from the operation's income or from a one percent tax the legislature has made available as an option to counties that would come from food sold in restaurants. Fran Anderson, executive secretary of the Chamber, said money made from the operation of the railroad could also be used to pay off the bond.

Heber City Mayor Scott Wright said it would be worth looking into. He said how the citizens would respond to a bond proposal would give an indication of how much they really want to keep the Creper.

Mawhinney said the Chamber already had a committee assigned to the Heber Creper. He said they had already talked with some organizations that are interested in investing in the railroad, including the one developing the Seven Peaks Resort

in Utah County. Ashton, also has reported that he has been contacted by some very experienced and capable firms interested in taking over the operation.

Commissioner LaRen Provost said the railroad committee should be formed immediately and work toward getting the train moving in time for the upcoming summer season. But, in addition to having to arrange for an operator, some safety issues must be addressed and corrected, Myrin said.

The commissioners said they would be prepared to make some recommendations during their next meeting, March 25, but they couldn't take any action Monday because the matter was not listed on the agenda.

Commissioner Pete Coleman suggested that one possible way of protecting the railroad would be for it to become a State operation, with the support of the City and County, possibly along with the State Historical Society. Mawhinney said during some Chamber discussions the idea of having the county operate the railroad also had been suggested.

Myrin offered his help if there are any problems in lease negotiations. He said some people at UDOT want a lease that "might be so tight it wouldn't work." For instance, he said one UDOT official thought the lease should be for only one year at a time, to be sure a lease can't "go on forever" if the

and butter, brownies, and milk.

Friday, March 15: Beef sirloin tips over rice, broccoli spear salad, roll and butter, cheesecake and milk.

Monday, March 18: Roast beef, potatoes and gravy, mixed vegetable, salad, roll and butter, cookies, and milk.



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mixed vegetable, fruit salad, roll and butter, pie, and milk.

Meals are subject to change!

The home delivered meals and the congregate meals that we supply to the Senior Citizens of Wasatch County are partially funded by Mountainland Association of Governments Division of Aging and Adult Services of Provo.

Monthly Dinner

Our monthly dinner will be on Thursday, March 21 at 12:15 at the high school.

**You Can Save
6 OFF**

cluded. Our first night stay will be at the new elegant Excalibur Hotel. There will be a dinner show right at the hotel for your pleasure. Included tour price per person: double occupancy, \$190; triple occupancy, \$180; single occupancy, \$220.

Lake Powell Trip

May 28, 29, and 30, three days. Tour price per person: double occupancy, \$230; triple occupancy, \$215; single occupancy, \$295.

Highlights

Capitol Reef National Park, picnic lunch, Lake Powell and boat cruise to Rainbow Bridge, Goblin Valley, lunch in Price, plus much more!

Bingo

We have Bingo every Thursday at 1 p.m., except for the third Thursday. That day is our monthly dinner at the high school.

Chorus

We have chorus every Monday at 1 p.m.

Aerobics

We have aerobics every Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 9-10.

Wendover

For those going to Wendover on April 4 and 5, your money is due by March 20. The price is \$30 and the bus will leave the Center at 10 a.m.

Firesides

March 18: Maude Derry and Opal Olivier, trip to Greece.

March 25: June and Claude Hicken family, musical program.

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Canadian

Rockies Tour

July 8-20, 13 days: Tour price per person: double occupancy, \$1,078; triple occupancy, \$1,030; single occupancy, \$1,250.

Highlights

Virginia City, MT, opera show and dinner, Glacier National Park, Waterton Lakes and boat ride, Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Banff National Park, Lake Louise and luncheon at the Chateau, Columbia Ice Fields Highway, Kamloops B.C., Hells Gate, Vancouver and city tour, ferry crossing through the Straights of Georgia to Victoria with city tour, Butchart Gardens, Seattle Space Needle, plus much, much more!

Hale Theater

We are going to take a bus to the Hale Theater on Friday, March 29. The play is "I'll Remember You." The price is \$7 and the bus will leave the Center at 4:30 p.m. "I'll Remember You" is a beautiful tale of love and humor. Set in Austria, this play will capture you with its romance, tickle you with its humor, and enthrall you with the classical violin performance of Krista Hales.

Hale Theater

We are going to the Hale Theater again on Friday, May 3. The bus will leave the Center at 6:30 p.m. and the price is \$6. The play is "Kiss and Tell." It is set in a small U.S. Town during World War II. It is a hilarious play about uniformed crazy girls, hard to keep promises and the trouble with gossip.